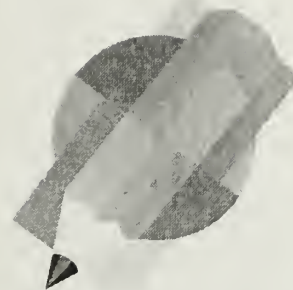




# Standards for Special Education

< Amended June 2004 >



# Essential Components

OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

for

APPROPRIATENESS

Students  
with  
Behaviour  
Disabilities

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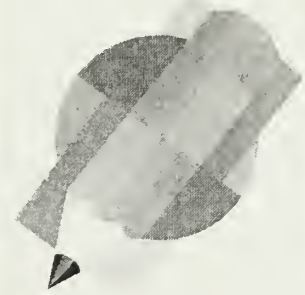


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# INTRODUCTION

## Foreword

The *Essential Components of Educational Programming for Students with Behaviour Disabilities* was developed for parents, classroom teachers, resource personnel and administrators who provide programming for these students.

The essential components and their indicators described in this document are based on research and best practices in the education of students with behaviour disabilities. The essential components should assist in accommodating and educating the students with behaviour disabilities. Achieving the indicators may be affected by practical constraints and the availability of resources. Careful planning, preparation and team work produce effective and appropriate programming for students with behaviour disabilities.

## Purpose

The intended purposes of this document are to:

- provide indicators of effective programming
- establish a common understanding of the terminology associated with this specialized field
- provide guidelines for the staff and parent roles related to educational programming for these students.

## Links to *Standards for Special Education, Amended June 2004*

*Standards for Special Education, Amended June 2004* requires school boards to identify and deliver programming for students with special needs in grades 1–12 in an effective manner. These standards promote a consistent, high quality educational practice within Alberta.

This document is directly linked to the appropriateness component of *Standards for Special Education, Amended June 2004* and the requirements relating to professional standards, individualized program planning, implementation and evaluation, and parent involvement in decision-making. According to *Standards for Special Education, Amended June 2004*, appropriateness means “*educational programs and services are designed around the assessed needs of the student and provided by qualified staff who are knowledgeable and skilled*” (p. 2).

## Guiding Principles

- Programming must be based on an individual student’s needs.
- Programming is an ongoing process, which is monitored and adjusted to meet a student’s needs.
- Students with behaviour disabilities need to participate in the regular curriculum to the fullest extent possible.
- The essential components of educational programming are not discrete; they are processes that work together.
- Teachers of students with behaviour disabilities should consider themselves members of an educational team.
- The needs of most students can be met without interfering with classroom routine.

# Essential Components of Educational Programming for Students with Behaviour Disabilities

The key component of educational programming for students with special needs, regardless of placement, is the focus on the individual learner. In Alberta, students with behaviour disabilities require additional educational programming supports because their behaviours interfere with their learning and safety, and/or that of other students. Students with emotional disabilities are included in this group. Developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating Individualized Program Plans (IPPs) for students with behaviour disabilities is required. Education programs for students with behaviour disabilities focus on the teaching and learning of skills necessary for optimal social and academic success in the school setting.

## ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

It is essential that students with behaviour disabilities receive effective educational programming prepared and implemented by collaborative learning teams that include members from schools, homes and communities. The essential components of such educational programming follow.

### 1. Knowledgeable Staff

Staff serving students with behaviour disabilities should have knowledge of and experience with the behavioural and cognitive strategies typically used to ensure student safety and success. While staff may not always have specialized training in the area of behaviour disabilities, access to learning opportunities, resources and classroom support is essential, as well as the will to build expertise and professional capacity.

#### Sample Indicators of Effective Programming

- Staff demonstrate competencies in identifying and implementing positive behavioural interventions and the use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and make ongoing programming adjustments.
- Staff members are knowledgeable about the behaviours associated with particular disabilities and consider this information when making programming decisions.
- Staff have opportunities to participate in ongoing professional growth activities related to programming for students with behaviour disabilities.

### 2. Teamwork

Learning team members facilitate student success by identifying critical goals, specific and measurable objectives linked to those goals, and interventions likely to lead to positive behaviour change. Collaboration is necessary when addressing the needs of all students, however, students with behaviour disabilities are particularly responsive to consistent interventions. Frequent informal communications regarding student progress help to ensure that successful programming strategies are identified and adjusted when necessary. Learning teams can also advocate for health-related services and community support that students may require in order to achieve optimal success in school.



### **Sample Indicators of Effective Programming**

- The learning team works collaboratively with other teachers, assistants, specialized teachers, behaviour specialists and mental health professionals to meet individual student needs.
- Learning teams develop goals and objectives for students at the beginning of each school year. The goals and objectives are linked to assessment results and progress is routinely monitored and evaluated. Changes to IPPs are made in response to student progress throughout the academic year.
- When required, coaches and facilitators with expertise in behavioural assessment and interventions are part of the team.

## **3. Meaningful Family Involvement**

Student achievement, attitudes and behaviour all improve when parents and other family members are involved. Working in partnership, the adults in a student's life may collectively develop effective programming and interventions.

### **Sample Indicators of Effective Programming**

- Learning team members engage in ongoing, frequent communications and use a variety of communication vehicles depending on the strengths and needs of a particular family.
- Parents have opportunities to participate in the IPP development and review process. In addition to academic and social needs, unique cultural needs are considered in the IPP and day-to-day programming.
- Parents are informed of and know what acceptable behaviours in the school and classroom look like and sound like.
- School personnel collaborate and share additional strategies with parents and family members for dealing with inappropriate behaviours and uncomfortable situations.

## **4. Flexible Programming**

Positive behaviour programming focuses on the variables that adults control or adjust to prevent unacceptable behaviours and encourage positive behaviours. As students with behaviour disabilities gain the skills required for social and academic success, problem behaviours decrease.

### **Sample Indicators of Effective Programming**

- Students are provided with opportunities to learn, practise and generalize social behaviours.
- Targeted social skills are linked to assessment data and observations of social needs across settings, and are stated in measurable, observable terms. When addressing objectives in the social domain, students with behaviour disabilities usually require direct instruction in the classroom, followed by opportunities to practise skills in the school and community.
- Adjustments to the instructional process, materials, schedules and environment are made, as required.
- The majority of time in the classroom is spent on instruction and learning activities.
- The time allotted for instruction involves active academic engagement, which results in high rates of student success.
- Instructional activities are linked to measurable objectives from the appropriate provincial programs of study.

## 5. Management of the Environment

While clear communication and expectations are required in any learning setting, it is imperative that students with behaviour disabilities have opportunities to learn in highly structured, well-managed learning environments.

### Sample Indicators of Effective Programming

- The classroom is a positive learning environment.
- Classroom rules, expectations and routines are taught directly, practiced and positively reinforced.
- Efficient transition procedures are taught, practiced and positively reinforced.
- Routine cues are employed to initiate and end typical classroom routines.
- Adults model and reinforce respectful and responsible behaviours.
- Students are engaged in learning and are on task the majority of time.
- Continuous, active supervision occurs across all settings and activities.
- Minor problem behaviours are managed positively and in a timely manner.
- Chronic problem behaviour is anticipated and plans are put in place for prevention.

## 6. School-wide Systems of Behavioural Support

Staff serving students with behaviour disabilities are most likely to be successful in positive school cultures with collaboratively developed plans for school-wide behaviour change.

### Sample Indicators of Effective Programming

- Three to five school-wide clearly defined behavioural expectations are established, articulated and posted in all classrooms. Some examples of school-wide rules are:

*All students will arrive on time and be prepared for class.*

*All students will respect personal space and property in the hallways.*

*All students and staff will use respectful language in the school.*

*All students will record assignments in their agendas.*

The school-wide rules may change over time and reflect the priority needs of a particular school community.

- A school-wide system exists for acknowledging students for their acceptable behaviours. The frequency and timing of reinforcement will influence results. A high rate and frequency of reinforcement combined with clear links to specific behaviours is more likely to result in behaviour change.
- Clearly defined and consistent consequences and procedures for responding to problem behaviours are developed and communicated to students, staff and parents.
- Behavioural achievements are communicated and celebrated. Many school teams publicly acknowledge progress towards the realization of school-wide goals in weekly gatherings.

## 7. Incentives and Consequences

A menu of reinforcers or incentives may be used to encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour. Social praise is an effective natural reinforcer. Specific verbal praise improves task engagement and behaviour. However, it is often necessary to pair social praise with activity, privilege or material reinforcers. Reinforcement or reward systems should be connected to IPP goals and objectives.

### Sample Indicators of Effective Programming

- Classroom personnel deliver a four-to-one ratio of positive to negative interactions.
- The student's learning team maintains records of reward and consequence systems and uses this data to determine the value of the system chosen.
- Building professional capacity to use data to assess the realization of goals and objectives is ongoing.
- Reinforcement and consequence procedures are outlined in IPPs and communicated to staff, students, parents and administrators.
- When targeted behaviours do not change, given a reasonable amount of time, adjustments are made to programming.

## 8. Behaviour Plans

Students with behaviour disabilities require systematic behaviour plans that lead to achievement of the goals and objectives stated in IPPs. Behaviour plans are linked to the assessment data, goals, objectives, transition plans and results documented in IPPs.

### Sample Indicators of Effective Programming

- Staff establish behaviour plans collaboratively and outline the behaviours adults will engage in to prompt changes in student behaviour.
- Behaviour plan expectations are clearly linked to the IPP and adults demonstrate a working knowledge of the plans for students.
- Observations, assessments, and previous and current IPPs are used to shape behaviour plans.

## 9. Analysis of the Purpose and Patterns of Problem Behaviour

Learning team members gain insight into the purposes of maladaptive behaviours by carefully observing and analyzing patterns of behaviour. This analysis is used to guide the development of effective behaviour plans.

### Functional Behavioural Analysis

Functional Behavioural Analysis (FBA) is one tool the learning team may use to better understand and respond to challenging behaviours. FBA is based on the premise that challenging behaviours are usually meaningful, have a purpose and serve a function for students. The function may be to gain social, tangible or sensory rewards, or to avoid conditions aversive to the student. The functional analysis cycle involves identifying a behaviour targeted for change and hypothesizing about the possible function of the behaviour. The possible function then guides programming decisions. For example, if the function of verbal acting-out behaviour is to avoid tasks a student finds difficult, the instructional processes may be adjusted so that that student only engages in the task at optimal times of the day, for limited



time durations with privilege or activity rewards for participation. The task itself may be structured so the student experiences success initially with a few familiar items, then moves on to more challenging items.

### **Wrap-around Process**

The wrap-around process is another tool the learning team may employ to establish an effective intervention plan for a student requiring individual support. Unlike FBA, the wrap-around process cannot be employed without the participation of the family. The wrap-around team is comprised of four to ten people who know the student best, including the student, the family and community members who have frequent interactions with the student. The team focuses on the needs of the student and family and develops a practical, outcome-based intervention plan. Success of the plan is dependent upon the support and participation of the family and community-based agents.

### **Sample Indicators of Effective Programming**

- Classroom and school personnel recognize that human behaviour can be shaped and modified.
- Even when behaviour is difficult to explain, collaborative efforts are made to identify the variables that may have prompted and/or maintained the behaviour of concern.
- The learning team routinely attends to events that occur before and after behaviours, and to the effects of imposed consequences. The information gathered from this attention, provides insight for creating and modifying behaviour plans.
- The learning team recognizes behaviour patterns and uses this information to intervene early and prevent serious acting-out behaviours.
- The learning team makes an ongoing effort to understand the purpose and patterns of individual students' behaviours. The team uses this information to guide the selection of interventions most likely to result in achievement of IPP goals and objectives.

## **10. Data Collection and Use**

In order to develop meaningful plans, it is important to collect, analyze and use baseline, intervention and post-intervention data. IPPs should document observed changes in targeted behaviours. Because human perceptions of behaviour are not always accurate, it is important to develop a system for recording behavioural observations. Systematic observations and documentation should be completed for both academic and behavioural goals and objectives included in IPPs. With the establishment of specific measurable goals and objectives, and a day-to-day working knowledge of those goals and objectives for individual students, evaluation results are evident and can be readily communicated to learning team members. Formative assessment occurs daily and is used to inform programming.

For students participating in a modified program, the IPP will contain learning outcomes which are significantly different from the provincial curriculum and are specifically selected to meet the student's special education needs. Students participating in an adapted program retain the learning outcomes of the *Program of Studies* and adjustments to the instructional process are provided to address the special education needs of the student. For students in an adapted program, data and documentation will be used to meet reporting requirements included in the *Guide to Education*.



## **DRAFT**

### **Sample Indicators of Effective Programming**

- Discipline data is routinely gathered, summarized and reported.
- Data is analyzed and used to develop and modify programs for students.
- Managable data collection and analysis systems are developed and refined on an ongoing basis.
- Staff collect data on the academic and behavioural goals and objectives included in students' IPPs. They use this data to communicate progress to members of learning teams and guide programming decisions.
- Data is gathered from a variety of sources including personal communications, observations, checklists, anecdotal records, and video and audio recordings.

**DRAFT**

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

**Access** – Students with special needs are entitled to have access in a school year to an education program in accordance with the *School Act*. Students with special education needs receive adapted or modified programming that enables and improves learning.

**Adapted Program** – An adapted program retains the learning outcomes of the Program of Studies and provides adjustments to the instructional process to address the special education needs of the student.

**Effective Behaviour Supports** is a system of school-wide processes and individualized instruction designed to prevent and decrease problem behaviour and to increase and maintain appropriate behaviour.

**Functional Behavioural Analysis (FBA)** is a process used by learning teams to target and eliminate undesirable behaviour. The team forms a hypothesis regarding the function or purpose of the maladaptive behaviour and then uses this information to develop effective alternatives to the undesirable behaviour.

**Learning Team** – The learning team consults and shares information relevant to the individual student's education and plans special education programming and services as required. The team may consist of the classroom teacher, parents, students (where appropriate), other school and jurisdiction staff aware of the students' needs, and others as required.

**Modified Program** – A modified program has learning outcomes, which are significantly different from the provincial curriculum and are specifically selected to meet the student's special education needs.

**Positive Behaviour Supports** is another term for Effective Behaviour Supports.

**Wrap-around Process** involves the family members, school personnel and community agents who wrap around or have direct personal involvement with the student who requires individual support. The wrap-around team focuses on typical needs in life domain areas, such as family, living situation, financial, educational/vocational, social/recreational, behavioural/emotional, psychological, health, legal, cultural, safety, and others. Services and supports are culturally competent and tailored to the unique values and cultural needs of the child, family, and the culture with which the family identifies.

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